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By donation

# PARTISAN!

The Monthly Partyist Magazine

# The Worst is Yet to Come

**INSIDE:**

**RCO Central Committee's open letter to the Left; A report from the QLD LNP state convention; A comrade's open letter to Blockade Australia; KAPD on unions and legality; And more.**

Introducing...

# PARTISAN!

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## Submissions

Partisan accepts and encourages unsolicited submissions from left-wing radicals and militants of all backgrounds. Articles can range from 800-1,000 words, and essays are limited to 2,000 words. Word count is less restrictive for other submissions including letters and reports, but we would encourage you to keep them concise.

Please proof-read etc prior to submitting. Our staff will also sub-edit as necessary. We publish monthly, so aim to submit before the 25th of the month at the absolute latest (15th-20th is ideal). Simultaneous submissions accepted on a case-by-case basis.

We are primarily interested in topics such as Marxist political economy, political strategy and tactics, engagement with Communists pasts and futures, critiques of Liberalism and Capitalism, interviews, and features. When making a submission, please include your name (or pseudonym), a summary of the piece, and any other relevant information (such as photos and sourcing). All submissions are to be emailed to the publishing email (see left).

# Why Communists need a strategy, and a party of our own.

Partisan Editors

Lenin's oft-repeated truism "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practise" should well be amended to say that without a revolutionary party there can be no revolutionary practise. The paramount struggle for communists in Australia today is the refoundation of the Communist Party, yet as we wage this struggle the question emerges of political strategy. Both in the fight for the party, and in the heightened era of class struggle that the party's re-formation will take place. Political strategy as an art has long been forgotten by the communist movement in Australia, having faded as the short-term squabbling of sects becomes the forefront of the political arena. Yet as we look forward toward the future of the communist movement, the question of how to get there must dominate communist debate.

The strategy of the workers movement must be forged through struggle and tempered in the waters of debate. This edition of Partisan puts forward the position of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation on political strategy, and what the road forward in the Australian front of the World Revolution looks like. We hope that it may kick-start debate within the Australian left on what the strategy of the working class must look like. We are not the average sect paper; we are here for open and honest debate, for polemics against the sect formula, and for outlining the necessity of a party, and from there, workers revolution.

Too many groups have set their mind on the end goal yet forgotten the steps to get there. The legacy of October 1917 looms large, yet many have forgotten the decades of work building up to the storming of the Winter Palace. We need a mass party, we need to mobilise the working class, and we need a program. These are the basics of any genuinely Communist strategy. Without a party we have nothing, and without a strategy we have less than nothing. It is crucial that as Communists we learn to look beyond the brief flourish of movements, and look towards the long, hard, and cold road towards unity. The road that leads towards revolution.

On this road we will see debate, and that is not something to reject but rather to revel in. Debate and open polemic are a vital part of the Communist tradition. We strive to turn this debate from meaningless squabbles over long fossilised shibboleths towards debate over the strategy towards a worker's republic.

We open this debate throughout this edition by touching on topics as diverse as Blockade Australia, the current Bengali revolution, Indigenous Liberation, and the need for a Democratic Republic. All these debates reflect the continuing maturation and development of not only the RCO, but the communist movement within Australia as a whole. We must turn our gaze towards high politics, towards the arena of genuine revolutionary strategy and go beyond the simple sect formula. Partisan is the Partyist newspaper of the communist movement, and we strive to live up to that label with every edition.

To those who disagree with the contents of our articles, we not only welcome but encourage debate within our letters section. For those looking for a publication willing to accept their articles we are open to you. We allow anyone, of any tradition to enter into debate within these pages. The communist movement lies in ruin, yet it is a historical necessity that it be reforged under a single banner. The working class have a world to win, we must work to raise the level of struggle.

There is no war but the class war, we call for all communists to unite under the banner of the party of the proletariat. Without a party we have nothing. With a party the world lies within our grasp. There is no possible road to a socialist society without the organisation of a mass communist workers party and the elevation of this party to political power. In the absence of such a party, the primary task of all communists is to create one.

# Build the Fire in the North!

RCO Central Committee

The Revolutionary Communist Organisation notes that the Northern Territory election campaign is currently underway, and due to conclude on the 24th of August. The Territory will have the choice of re-electing the incumbent Labor government, or bringing to power the right-wing Country Liberal Party, the local affiliate of the Liberal and National parties.

Regardless of the result on election day, Capital will win. Aboriginal People will remain dispossessed of land, reparations won't be paid and criminalisation by the carceral state will continue. Both Labor and the Country Liberal Party (CLP) have campaigned on a tough-on-crime platform that will worsen the social crises affecting Aboriginal People.

The incumbent Labor government has been leading the process of expanding the Territory's prison system which disproportionately impacts Aboriginal People. Part of this plan involved forcing Darwin's only residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation service to shut down in July to make way for a new women's prison. The Labor party is working to strengthen the repressive arms of the Territory which pose a barrier to the liberation of working people of all races and nationalities. Regardless of whether the CLP or Labor win this process will continue.

Furthermore, there is no commitment on the part of Labor or the CLP to raise the age of criminal responsibility in the Territory above 12. Both parties are campaigning for a crackdown on youth crime as a symptom of social crisis without addressing its causes, namely colonisation and racism. Addressing these root causes is antithetical to Labor as the state building party of Australian capitalism and the CLP as a party of the Territory's high bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeoisie Greens raise progressive demands at this election but fundamentally mislead the working people of the Territory by masking the need for a workers' party. The time and talents of many proletarians sympathetic to socialism, overwhelmingly young, are swept into a political project of another class uninterested in overthrowing the Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian Capital is built on three pillars. These are the colonial dispossession of Aboriginal People and Torres Straits Islanders, the exploitation of working people at home and imperial extraction of value from working people in peripheral developing nations. A future workers' party and the current workers' press must clearly articulate these truths and educate, agitate and organise working people to overthrow the three pillars. Both Laborism and petty bourgeois green politics promote loyalty to the capitalist state and act to shore up its support and legitimacy among Territorians despite sometimes campaigning for progressive demands.

The only path forward is the formation of a mass workers' party to coordinate and advance the campaign for the implementation of the communist program in all liberatory movements that aim to supersede the present state of things. Core tasks, especially in the north of the continent, will be Blak liberation, disbanding the Northern Territory Police, expelling the Australian Federal Police and prison abolition.

A workers' party should use future Territory elections to campaign to build worker support for all the demands of the communist program including radical land reform, dismantling the police, opening the prisons, Aboriginal self determination and the militant eradication of racism. These are all demands which require the overthrow of the capitalist commonwealth, and the establishment of a democratic republic through which First Nations people, as part of the continent's working class, can abolish the distinction between coloniser and colonised.

***EDITOR'S NOTE: As of publishing, the NT election has taken place, with the Country Liberal Party (the NT branch of the Liberal Party) claiming victory.***

# Open Letter to the Left

## RCO Central Committee

**A letter from the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation: Revive the Republican struggle, Oppose the King's visit!**

To our comrades on the left in so-called Australia,

Our call to action is addressed to our sister organisations on the Communist left. We call for a collective organising by comrades of demonstrations against the visit of the King and Queen consort. This is the best opportunity to bring about a revival in the republican movement that died following the defeat of the 1999 referendum on an Australian republic. As monarchy grants birthright to rule over the working class and colonised peoples, the proletariat must rally to demand the abolition of these feudal antidemocratic vestiges if it is to ever rule as a class.

Communists must also explicitly reject the chauvinistic 'green and gold' republicanism of liberal-nationalist groups such as the Australian Republic Movement, that seek to replace the monarchy with a liberal republic. The constitutional monarch's rule, and the offices of Governor General, and the presidential Prime Minister alike are direct descendants of feudal absolute monarchy. To claim that exchanging the monarchy for some form of liberal republic would improve the situation is at best a distraction from class struggle, and at worst collaboration with the progressive bourgeoisie. Liberal republicans have emphasised their republic would not affect change in the day-to-day functioning of civic society. This project is not intended to strengthen the democratic participation of the working class but a means to create new ceremonial offices of state for bourgeois politicians.

The RCO recognises that our sister organisations have theoretical differences when it comes to the state. Our perspective is that capitalist democracy disempowers the working class. Voting for Members of Parliament is the only form of democratic participation, which is denied to millions of non-citizens. The competition between the House of Representatives and the Senate, with unequal representation, dilutes the democratic mandate. Parliament's power is weakened by the division of powers with the Prime Minister heading an executive largely outside parliament's control. The robo debt scandal and resulting deaths of Centrelink recipients happened due to these institutions being shielded from democratic accountability. The criminal justice system exists independent of society's demands with hundreds of Aboriginal deaths in custody resulting in no officers being charged. The Constitution safeguards this system for Capital, a document that protects most companies from nationalisation including the supermarkets currently driving up the cost of living. The RCO affirms the working class should be able to discuss, debate and make all decisions over all political issues such as these. To that end, we call for annual elections with universal suffrage regardless of citizenship to a single assembly with recallable delegates on the average workers wage with the potential for bound mandates. This assembly should be a working body exercising all forms of governance democratically with any other officials directly elected.

We call on the cooperation of all communist organisations to join us in organising 'red' republican protests during the King's visit, especially in the towns and cities he is due to disgrace with his presence.

In solidarity,

**The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation**

# Smash the Industrial Dictatorship

RCO Central Committee

The Australian Labor Party is seeking to impose an industrial dictatorship over the trade union movement. The forced administration of the Construction, Forestry, and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU), the firing of hundreds of trade union officials, and the placing of hundreds of thousands of construction workers on the chopping block must be understood as a general attack on the working class at the behest of Capital. All the major factions of the Australian bourgeoisie are united in the need to crush the power of the organised working class, to shatter the union of construction and industrial workers, and to drive down wages in the building sector.

The Australian state already imposes a system of industrial dictatorship over the working class in every sector. Drastically limiting the capacity to strike and organise, this dictatorship functionally asserts a state monopoly over the trade union movement, bound at the hip to the Australian Labor Party. The current regime imposed upon the CFMEU, with the support of the leadership of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is simply a strengthening and sharpening of the existing dictatorship.

Australian workers must consider their options carefully. Only a fool would think that crushing the CFMEU would improve the lives of working people, or end corruption in the building industry. The trade union leadership, of the ACTU, the CFMEU, and otherwise, are either entirely supportive of the current regime, or seem content to limit themselves to legal challenges. These challenges are unlikely to succeed absent the organised power of the working class. The response to the current attack on the workers should be a wave of strikes in the construction sector, and preparation for a general strike by the trade union movement. However, the leadership, utterly conservative and class collaborationist, is unwilling to even consider such an option. The unions themselves, moribund and strangled by decades of the industrial dictatorship, are ill prepared and undermanned for such a struggle.

Our battle today is a defensive one. All forces must be mobilised to defend the ability of construction workers to freely organise, and to oppose the sharpening of the current industrial relations regime. However, we must also look to the future, and the road which we will need to travel to overturn the industrial dictatorship and impose the dictatorship of the working class - and industrial democracy.

**Resolution**

The Revolutionary Communist Organisation calls for the following:

- All Out to Defend the CFMEU! Rank and File Strike Committees should be formed on every construction site, and hold elections to a general meeting of delegates. Workers in all sectors must demonstrate their solidarity with the construction workers.
- For a Red Faction in every union! Socialists, communists, and all those committed to the organised power of the working class must come together to organise rank-and-file committees, and collectives of red workers in every industry. On this basis, we can begin a struggle to democratise the labour movement, and to organise the unorganised.
- Smash Class Collaboration. ACTU cretinism and Setka-ite gangsterism are two sides of the same coin - class collaboration. For a militant labour movement based in democratic industrial unions.

# TALKING REDS

# A SOCIALIST DISCUSSION GROUP

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

**2PM**

**THE BURROW**
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**HOSTED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS**

# Factions over Visions at the

Nathan Kats

*Nathan Kats gives a first-hand report on the chaotic 2024 state conference of the Queensland Liberal-National Party.*

The recent Queensland State Convention of the Liberal National Party (LNP) revealed the party's internal dynamics and ongoing challenges. Despite the three-day duration from the 5th to the 7th of July, the convention was marked by a scarcity of significant achievements and a notable absence of innovative solutions. Rather than presenting a compelling alternative vision, this lack of forward-thinking and fresh ideas raises concerns about the LNP's future direction and ability to adapt to changing political landscapes.

Various observers attended the event; including party members, donors, lobby groups, media representatives, delegates, and politicians. However, the restrictions on observer participation, particularly the evident fear of media scrutiny, cast a shadow of doubt on the party's transparency. The contentious relationship between the LNP and the media, with fact-checking and accountability being significant concerns, further fuels distrust in a party riddled with accusations of dishonesty.

The LNP's paranoia about infiltrators and information leaks is evident, yet there seem to be few innovative ideas circulating within the party. Much of the rhetoric remains unchanged, albeit with a slightly more fanatical tone. The usual calls for unity and tough stances on crime were reiterated, and the claim that they are not simply a conservative or moderate party but the Liberal party was a recurring theme, often surfacing during intense factional infighting.

Going into the event, I fully expected as much that the LNP would be a disappointment. The LNP is weak internally. It is a dead and dying entity filled with rats seeking to take as much as possible while the entity remains salvageable. The talk of the dangers of a hung parliament seemed ironic given the LNP's internal divisions, which leave it in a state of limbo. These divisions not only hinder the party's ability to present new and working ideas but also create

[Photo: Day 3 of the Queensland LNP State conference, (Dr Christian Rowan MP Facel

a reluctance to challenge the interests of powerful donors and foreign entities, particularly from the U.S. This, in turn, raises concerns about the party's ability to govern effectively. The resulting hesitation stifles meaningful reform and innovation, leaving the party in a precarious position.

Infighting between the Moderates and the Conservatives further incapacitates the party. This internal power struggle prioritizes factional dynamics over public welfare, leaving the party ineffective in addressing immediate and long-term issues. Thus, the party becomes nothing more than an excuse for donors and lobby groups to get their way while everyone else in the state gets left behind. The inability of the two sides to work together should cause the people of Queensland to feel a mix of relief and frustration. Australians should be wary; nothing good will come from the potential incoming state and federal governments. The Australian people saw what factional fighting led to when it came to the Rudd-Morrison era.

The LNP is sabotaged from within; they need no infiltration from outside. Both factions fear the other will shut them out if one gets more power. It is a Game of Thrones, a disappointing reality for the people of Queensland. Additionally, the

# Queensland LNP conference

book)]

LNP's reluctance to crack down on market manipulation and the resulting renter economy reflects a future where the property-owning class wields political power, disenfranchising the renter class. This situation underscores the broader reality within the LNP: it is less a battle of political ideologies and more a contest between factions of the ruling class vying for power, with solutions rarely addressing the needs of the working class.

A particularly intriguing aspect of the convention was the mention of an individual working in the shadows to influence the party's direction. This Individual, who operates outside the party room and is not officially associated with the LNP, has managed to wield considerable power within the party through various agents. This Individual is a significant annoyance to the party executives, who are focused on keeping lobbyists and donors happy. Their focus on these third parties' investments and business opportunities raises concerns about the party's priorities and commitment to serving the public interest. No name was given as the party executives didn't wish to give the individual any unwarranted attention.

There were also significant concerns from within the party that, with changes to laws concerning political donations, the 'average person' would find it more challenging to elect their favored candidates. The fear was that the election would instead be gerrymandered in favor of Unions. 'Average person' was code for donors and lobbyists, who were worried about losing their influence in the party's decision-making process.

Support for Israel passed at the convention, yet there is a noticeable shift within the party toward growing disillusionment with Israel. This is partly due to the actions of the Israeli government during October 7th and the influence of the Israel Lobby. Within the Christian Lobby, there appears to be a divide when it comes to supporting Israel, with half in favor of Israel and the other half against it. This growing disillusionment is a clear indicator of the party's evolving attitudes towards international relations and the influence of lobbying groups. Additionally, there was talk that Muslim disillusionment towards Labor could potentially increase the Liberals' chances of forming a government. There is also talk that the Federal Liberal Party will likely regain the seats lost to Independents.

The convention also included discussions reflecting extreme views, such as considering the Greens party as communist and emphasising that "friends don't let their friends vote Greens" and "should not allow their children to vote Greens." An auction featuring a portrait of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, an emblem of an era characterised by suppressed workers' rights and unchecked police power, highlighted a troubling nostalgia admired by both factions within the party. This event, which symbolises a return to a more authoritarian era, underscores the party's internal dynamics and its potential implications for governance and public interest.

Overall, the LNP's internal strife and lack of innovative solutions suggest a party more preoccupied with internal power struggles than serving the public interest. This internal discord, often overshadowing the party's policy making and governance, raises questions about the LNP's overall competance as a party of capital.

# Fight for a Republic

Brunhilda Olding

The visit of 'King' Charles to Australia is one that must be resolutely opposed by every socialist, communist, or revolutionary.

Of course, this statement is perhaps stating the obvious, what socialist would support the institution of a monarchy? Disdain for the royal family is perhaps the bare ideological minimum for the left on this continent. Nonetheless in a period of strategic confusion, and ideological disconnect it is of vital importance that the Communists secure their position as the vanguard of the working class, with the most clarified, and revolutionary demands. After all, as Marx and Engels outlined in the Communist Manifesto 'the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.'

Yet what the battle of democracy means has been distorted, falsified, and weakened. It is the task of the Communists to clarify what the struggle of the working class is in the battle for democracy, and the clearest answer that emerges is the fight for a socialist, democratic republic. A republic based upon the highest ideals of the proletariat, and the historical aspirations of humanity for liberty. This republic will not be one proclaimed through parliament but forged through the revolutionary transformation of society under the aegis of the proletarian revolution, a revolution that will be more than world-shaking, but era defining.

Whilst the bourgeois will claim that they hold the ability to grant republicanism, if we look at the historical facts, and recent political developments this statement will be revealed as the face it is. Even if restricted to Australia alone, we have plenty of examples of how the bourgeois and capitalists have actively failed the transition to Republicanism. For example, the 1999 referendum, sabotaged by John Howard's proposal of a president. Under the Albanese regime, Labor has abandoned even the weakest support for a Republican referendum, deferring to a second term that they may not even get.  Yet even if in some miracle the government grew a backbone and did introduce a referendum it would not be a democratic republic.

This Republic may claim the trappings of democracy, but the working class know better. The legacy of the Paris Commune burns bright in our memory, and in our struggle against the capitalist class. We fight for a parliament that is both a legislative, and an executive body. Not for a monarchical president or Prime Minister. The working class must be armed, and power granted to a universal militia as opposed to a standing army. As long as the state holds the monopoly of violence the bourgeois will rule, power must be placed in the hands of the working class, and the working class alone. As the old saying goes, 'democracy is a rifle on the shoulder of the working class'. If Albanese were to proclaim a republic tomorrow, it would most certainly not be a workers republic.

The struggle for Communism is the fight for the total negation of the capitalist world order, it is for the transformation of society into one that is truly democratic, not one based off the rule of the bourgeois class. That is what we fight for when we raise the banner of a democratic republic, that is what we fight for as 'King' Charles deigns to visit England's extant colony.

The transformation of class society will by necessity include finishing the uncompleted work of the bourgeoisie. In the Imperial periphery this takes the form of the final elements of state building, the breakup of large land holdings and the collectivisation of land, and the final destruction of all feudal remnants. Most notably the monarchies which infest the planet, and all other parasitical classes, that survived through their own transformation into the bourgeoisie. This is a task that unless led by the proletariat united under the banner of an international movement will fail. We cannot rely on military juntas (such as those in the Sahel), or 'reformist' figures within the ruling classes to complete this. The revolution must be one led by the labouring classes to destroy all forms of exploitation. In the Imperial Core it involves winning the battle for democracy, which by necessity will see the smashing of the bourgeois state, and the laying of the groundwork for socialism. But socialism is a world system, our revolution will only be a foothold, it is vital that we push forwards to the final struggle, and the last state: the World Socialist Republic

# We Need a Communist Women's Front

Olga Konstantinova

As women in this modern world, we find ourselves in a most precarious position. On one hand, Capital wishes to exploit our historical unwaged domestic labour and reap from it the benefits of an ever-expanding class of wage-slaves. Yet, Capital cannot deny the profits that are able to be materialised from women's inclusion into the work force. Thus, the modern woman finds herself on the edge of being quartered, tethered to expectations and contradictions that threaten to destroy her.

From these contradictions arises a need for the Communist Women's Front. Whilst not a new concept, we find it becoming increasingly imperative that we resurrect it from the dustbins of history. In absence of a Communist party, we must turn to other means of organisation of the working class. For us, the Front provides this means, opening up the ability to engage in educational, propagandistic and agitational activities within specifically female layers of the class. We see this task as particularly pertinent in an age where feminist consciousness is at an all-time low. Liberal or bourgeois feminism has run rampant through the 20th and 21st centuries and acts as a veil that clouds the vision of true emancipation, replacing it with superficial goals and aims that keep women firmly pinned under the thumb of Capital. If we are to 'stand up', women of the world must educate themselves and educate each other on the importance of radical and revolutionary feminism as the only way forwards. The United Front provides this structure by weaving together the many threads of women into a strong fabric, and from this fabric we may cut and sew the revolution, as without women at the forefront, there can be no true liberation.

The first step in the formation of the Women's United Front, is the formation of intermediate agitating organisations. As Communists, we cannot rely only on the efforts of our own organisations – fragmented as they are into sects organised on the basis of dogmatic theoretical unity. We cannot hope to succeed by 'going straight to the masses', in this case the female masses, and competing directly with each other. We must instead cooperate with one another on the explicit basis that we are socialists and we are feminists. We must agitate, together, among the newly radicalising social layers, regardless of our disagreements. Our work must be targeted. We must not do this as fragments competing with one another for loyal recruits in the waves of struggle that arise among the masses, but work together to build the struggle openly as socialists.

The RCO's Women's Caucus has already begun to weave this tapestry through its meeting with Radical Women (RW). For readers not aware, Radical Women is a wing of the broader women's movement that works specifically in the interests of the working class from a Marxist perspective (as many of us do). Through this meeting we explored the mechanics of a common front and it provided a unique insight into perspectives other than our own, which is something we always cherish and value. However, the RCO stands firmly on its belief that we must adopt a partyist perspective if we are to achieve our shared goal. We believe that the Communist Party is a necessity because of the strength and organisation of its main opponent – the Bourgeoisie. Further, we cannot kid ourselves, the working class shall not organise itself 'on its own', as no movement in history has done.

We must use the Communist party to educate, harden and unify. And, as covered above, in lieu of the Communist party we must take baby steps to form it, and those steps are in the shape of a Women's Front.

# Legality and Mass Action

## Communist Workers Party of Germany (KAPD)

*"For the workers, the Essen and Bochum events represent a highly instructive chapter on economic peace, legality and mass action.*

*The employers, in their ever-increasing awareness of power due to the indulgence of the trade union reformists, in their trust in the bourgeois bloc authorities and the economically peaceful labor courts, simply disregarded the arbitration award.*

*The trade union leaders, on the other hand, are the willing slaves of the legality of the bourgeois state. The declaration of binding force, pronounced by the labor minister of the bourgeois bloc cabinet, creates "law" and "right" for them, even if the law and right of the working class go to hell over it.*

*The dead letter of an arbitration award carries so much weight for them that they appeal not to the power of the working class, but to the labor courts loyal to business, even when business obviously breaks the award."*

The above sentences were written in the "Rote Fahne" [Communist Party of Germany's central organ] on January 8 on the occasion of the spontaneous strike by steel workers in Bochum and Essen against the refusal of several iron employers to implement the Düsseldorf arbitration award as agreed. The union leaders of the DMV [German Metalworkers Union] portrayed this dispute over the interpretation of the arbitration award as a "rear-guard action" in order to at least somewhat mitigate the after-effects of their shameful capitulation before the arbitration order. But in vain: — the DMV — sanction for the work stoppages in Bochum and Essen did not mean a temporary interruption of the union's powerlessness.

With their appeal to the "labor courts" of the capitalist state for the literal implementation of the iron arbitration award by the employers, the union bosses have just proved that they regard the proletarian class struggle as a part of capitalist legality in every case. The trade unions in Bochum-Essen were not concerned with a conscious struggle against the obvious workers' fraud of the arbitration policy, but only with restoring constitutional respect for the disregarded state authority. After all, the strict recognition of a compulsory state tariff is a thousand times more important to the trade union leaders than the question of how the workforce should practically turn the employers' tariff breaches into their own push against the system of arbitration fraud.

By appealing to the bourgeois "labor courts" against their recalcitrant collective bargaining counterparts in the exploitative camp, the trade union law enforcers of the capitalist arbitration dictatorship are doing nothing more than performing the economically peaceful comedy of a workers' struggle in order to reassure the rebellious proles with the lentil dish of capitalist democracy through this pseudo-radical trick. The trade union "action" in Bochum and Essen only amounted to this distraction of the workers from the planned attack against the employers' front, only to this dispute about the "right" and "law" of capitalist arbitration practice.

Therefore, when the "Rote Fahne" once again denounces the failure of the trade union bosses and places the question of "legality and mass action" in the foreground, it will certainly be applauded by large sections of the working class. But as correct and necessary as such ruthless criticism is, the KPD is, as usual, only telling half the truth. The KPD conceals the fact that the social-democratic trade union leaders today are "the mindless slaves of the legality of the bourgeois state" because the trade union organizations themselves have become a living part of capitalist society. The KPD conceals the fact that the arbitration dictatorship of the capitalist state is firmly anchored in the trade union statutes and therefore the "trade union reformists must appeal not to the power of the working class but to the labor courts loyal to the company". The KPD conceals the fact that every trade union, as a party to collective bargaining, is obliged to abide by arbitration awards and must therefore stab in the back all those proletarians who break through the framework of capitalist legality. The fact that the trade unions, as a result of their role as state-

recognized arbitration partners, are only allowed to follow the dead letter of an arbitration award was clearly demonstrated by the Hamburg dockers' strike.

Answering the question of “legality and mass action” in a revolutionary sense therefore also means making a clear class distinction in the field of state conciliation policy. In other words: capitalist legality and proletarian mass action are as hostile to each other as fire and water — but the mass action of the working class can only have a revolutionary character if it is also consciously directed against the trade union guardians of bourgeois legality. From this logically arises the necessity of the political and organizational break with trade union tactics, the necessity of proletarian class unity in the revolutionary factory organizations of the General Workers' Union [AAU]. Only where the workers radically break with the law-abiding trade unions and go over to the organization of the revolutionary class struggle will the way be clear for proletarian mass actions against capitalism and its reformist guardians of the law.

## From the Editor:

This piece was originally written in 1929 and was published in the “Kommunistiche Arbeiter-Zeitung” (“Communist Workers Newspaper”), which was the central organ of the Communist Workers Party of Germany (Kommunistiche Arbeiterpartei Deutschelands, KAPD).

It is a biting critique of the union leadership and the mainline Communist Party (KPD). It critiques the trade union leadership for being formalists obsessed with the courts and the legal system, with doing things the “right way”, while it critiques the KPD for obscuring why the trade unions do this: because they are a “living part of capitalist society”.

We include this short article into this month’s Partisan in light of the events transpiring with the CFMEU union. As the Labor Party assaults the union and strips its members of basic democratic rights within the union, the CFMEU’s leadership tries to defend itself by... appealing to the Supreme Court.

We hope you find it interesting and relevant.

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**Demand the release of all political prisoners!**

As Russia continues to wage an imperialist war against Ukraine, Communists of all stripes have fallen under the boot of state repression (both in Russia and Ukraine). Oppose the Moscow and Kyiv gangsters, demand the release of all political prisoners!

Russian Marxist Boris Kagarlitsky was imprisoned by the Russian state under phony “anti-terrorism” charges in 2023. As of February 2024, he has been sentenced to five years in a prison colony (Meduza).

Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk was arrested by the Ukrainian Security Service on April 25th 2024. As of writing, he is being held in Nikolaev in deplorable conditions. He is being falsely charged with being a Russian state operative and a propagandist for Moscow’s imperialist invasion. If found guilty, he faces a life sentence (WSWS).

Many more communists, trade unionists, and anti-war protesters are being incarcerated arbitrarily by the Russian and Ukrainian governments. We must support them all, and demand their immediate release.

# Open Letter to Blockade Australia

Anonymous

**Dear Blockaders and comrades,**

I hope this letter finds all of you very well. I politely ask that you read this letter. It contains in it the sum of my experiences working alongside you and I hope that the lessons I have learned from that time can be imparted to you also. Although this letter may be lacking in praise, this does not mean that I do not praise you. I admire all you, your courage and wit, immensely and I hope that this letter is seen for what it is: an attempt to better our movement out of respect for our goals and strategies, and not to an attempt at a takedown or snide critique. To sum it up, your important mission, to turn the reformist climate movement into a workshop for Anarchism, suffers from a fear of rejecting reformism. Many of BA's most staunch members reject reformism in discussions with one another. However, in practice, struggle against the state is not in and of itself sufficient to radicalise reformists coming over from the non-violent direct-action climate movement. Bunny messaging was more likely to be reformist than revolutionary, and little effort is taken to educate bunnies on proper revolutionary messaging.

The politics of consensus democracy must not be applied to BA. Practically, a group that explicitly aims to incorporate reformists into its revolutionary ranks cannot achieve any kind of meaningful consensus other than appeal to the lowest-common-denominator. I argue that, from these issues, numerous other issues have emerged in BA which continue to haunt us: misogyny and predatory behaviour within our ranks and the failure to adopt a truly intersectional politics.

**Consensus Politics**

Firstly, we must address the flaws of consensus decision-making within BA. I saw numerous problems emerge from this practice within BA, which re-asserted the pressure of capitalist power dynamics because of this prefiguration. Blockaders, in conversation, were aware of the need to manufacture compromise rather than for it to emerge organically. This resulted in less-experienced and more reformist elements within the organisation blocking revolutionary messaging (such as on Israel). Furthermore, anticipating the need for consensus led to members in the organisation remaining silent so as not to invigorate the more opinionated and senior, and often male, members who, as a result, effectively controlled the decision-making on larger scale strategy and messaging.

A totally prefigurative politics is impossible under the yoke of capitalism, which divides us into classes, genders, and races. It hides revolutionary politics away from us, confusing us with these divisions. Because of these divisions, an immediate basis for solidarity on any single issue between disparate groups of people is hidden from us. Without explicitly revolutionary politics to unite us, consensus politics stealthily reproduces wider social hierarchies and limits capacity for the only politics that will save us (revolutionary politics). There is a huge variety of disparate politics within BA because it is united only by a desire to take dramatic action. The only "consensus" that can be formed on anything then is, in reality, accepting the weakest anti-revolutionary view.

**Reformism in Our Ranks**

Underlying this is a misapplication of a core Anarchist principle - that struggle radicalises people. Core Blockaders have explicitly used this principle to justify their strategy to me: we do not need to have anything more than a subtly revolutionary message, because anyone who works with us will be radicalised after subjugation by the police, court system, and after seeing no progress made by reformist institutions.

It has not played out this way. Many bunnies were Greens party activists trying to earn "activist cred" before returning to electoral politics. Even veteran bunnies rarely called for anything resembling revolutionary transformative politics, instead reiterating increasingly desperate demands for attention and validation by the state.

Few attempts are made towards constructing a consistent revolutionary internal politics, and these attempts suffer from the flaw that the messaging itself suffers from, which is a lack of positive content. It provides no vision of an alternate society and is instead a simple, vague negation of reformist politics (but not of the society itself). This allows radical reformist politics, which simply use radical means to achieve state validation, to sneak into the cracks. There is no method for ensuring bunnies stick to the messaging anyway, on the basis that this would be exclusionary or authoritarian.

This fear of "authoritarian" or "exclusionary" action has numerous other consequences. Lacking the ability to collectively discipline Blockaders, information security is impossible to maintain to a high standard. Without a positive agenda of transformation and the articulation of revolutionary politics, sexually predatory men are attracted to the movement and unable to be effectively removed. Similarly, the biologically essentialist politics of the "divine feminine", that many women Blockaders implicitly believe in, leads to BA often being a transphobic organising space. Furthermore, it has been the mission of feminists for 200 years to demystify and denaturalise femininity, pointing out its nature as a social construct, and the "divine feminine" ideology is completely anti-feminist.

Majority decision making, the only way to adopt revolutionary politics - the negation of current society - is abandoned in favour of consensus decision making, which, as I have seen, breeds conservatism.

**The Politics of Trauma**

The post-action debriefs are indeed the best opportunity for discussions that raise the consciousness of bunnies. Unfortunately, trauma politics have infected this practice. The principle in BA is that bunnies, sharing their trauma of being suppressed by the police, will be able to realise the connections between these experiences and build this into a common picture of solidarity, a strategy shared to some extent by the feminist movement in the 60s - 80s. Instead, however, what occurs is that Blockaders take turns sharing their experiences and being listened to and recognised for how difficult it must have been, with observers commenting on how hard it must have all been.

In practice, instead of a collective identity forming around these experiences, Blockaders oscillate between therapist and patient. Like therapy itself, this may be useful but is nonetheless limited to individual action and experiences rather than collective solidarity and social action.

This is representative of a wider issue within the activist scene in Australia. This culture regards intersectionality as the process of "recognising" or "centreing" the struggles of minority groups, practising this same swapping between therapist and patient, observer and observed, rather than building a common picture of solidarity and united struggle. This instinct is understandable - it comes out of experiences in the 20th century with white feminists espousing "sisterhood" between all women, which in reality meant subjugation of black women to the agenda of the white woman. However, it is also motivated primarily by a desire for validation, rather than liberation, and white guilt.

**Towards Transformative Politics**

Truly transformative politics does neither: it does not segment struggle into different parallel lines, linked together only by moral obligation, nor does it collapse the contexts of all forms of subjugation into the narrative of the most prominent exploited group. The prevailing logic is that, "well, workers can't be liberated if women aren't either, so I suppose we have to help the girls out," or "it's my duty as a white person to support the struggle of black people against racism.". This is a mistake!

Systems of exploitation are not specific to the primary object of their exploitation, they affect everyone universally also! They are not separate but interlocking systems, they are the arms of the same octopus.

As a man, you too are oppressed by patriarchy, which controls your sexuality and enforces standards of behaviour upon you, which mutilates your androgynous human soul.

Cisgenders, whenever you have felt ugly, too "mannish" or too "feminine", that is gender dysphoria! It is not unique to transness, everyone is punished by the impossible gender standards that the ruling class enforces on us.

Whites, us who have been raised to fear and loathe our fellow dark-skinned humans, we are

COLONIALISM
CAPITALISM
RACISM
ABLEISM
BIGOTRY
PATRIARCHY
IMPERIALISM
INDIVIDUALISM

# Open Letter to Blockade Australia

humiliated by this fear which limits our capacity to love one another!

All this to say that there is only one struggle - the struggle for universal human liberation. And it unites every single one of us.

There is a fear amongst the more genuinely Anarchistic Blockaders that, were we to adopt a revolutionary line and attempt to implement this internally, that we would limit our growth and exclude potential future revolutionaries. I have been told that, actually, our current messaging allows us to appeal to all kinds of people from all walks of life.

This is sacrificing long-term strength for short-term growth. History, in the form of the Occupy movement, demonstrates that this sort of loose coalition is a recipe for eventual disillusionment and defeatism.

History has also proven that revolutions are a product of leadership from the front. By adopting transformative politics, which is revolutionary, which attacks all aspects of oppressive society, which takes the hard road and from day one makes the proud claim that one day we will tear it all down - this is the only way to actually appeal to all kinds of people from all walks of life. Rather than appealing to their reformist sensibilities now, and instead by arguing staunchly for their liberation at every turn and in every circumstance, we will win them over.

While we must not enforce a dominant white perspective on other Blockaders, we must abandon this fear of unity and forge ahead to a transformative revolutionary politics.

**Where to Go From Here**

To this end, I make the recommendations that BA:

- Abandon consensus politics. Form assemblies to debate strategy and ideas. Make use of affirmative-action processes to ensure all are given a voice. Exclude Blockaders who fail to treat others with respect.
- Adopt an openly transformative and revolutionary line that envisions a better society. Ensure bunnies stick to this messaging and do not reuse bunnies if they demonstrate they cannot.
- Patiently raise the revolutionary political consciousness of Blockaders through accessible means, whether this be reading groups, workshops, or collective discussions.
- Ensure core activists who lead strategic decision-making are accountable to the collective without compromising security culture.
- Create democratic non-authoritarian procedures for actually ensuring security discipline.

**Thank you for reading.**

**In solidarity,**

**Anonymous**

[Photo: Banner on a blocked coal train (Blockade Australia Facebook)]

# Breaker Morant: Nationalis

Michael Ruhl

The film Breaker Morant (1980) directed by Bruce Beresford is a highly acclaimed courtroom film of questionable historical accuracy (which this review will only address as relevant) that depicts the court-martial of three Australian soldiers serving in the British Army charged with the revenge killings of civilian prisoners during the Second Boer War. The individuals on trial were lieutenants Harry "Breaker" Morant, Peter Handcock, and George Witton of the Bushveldt Carbineers. The defence asserted that they should be acquitted on the basis that they were following orders to not take prisoners. Whether such orders existed was the focus of the film. Such orders were not proven to have been issued, and all three were found guilty of murder, with Morant and Handcock being executed. The trial's proceedings were interspersed with flashbacks depicting what was being discussed, including combat and the executions of prisoners of war. The film deserves praise for its stellar cinematography. However, one cannot ignore the problems with its attempt to, according to the director himself, convey a pacifist message that repudiates war and the Nuremberg Defence. The film's narrative, as well as the medium of film itself, inevitably caused it to take on an Australian chauvinistic and pro-war character.

The film clearly depicted the men as guilty as charged and having carried out murders against civilians and POWs on their own accord. However, it explicitly propagated the myth used historically that there were standing orders issued to kill all Boer POWs, which would have exonerated the accused for at least some of the murders. It also depicted the trial as motivated by the British to scapegoat the murders on three soldiers to bring about peace talks with the Boer republics. These claims are used to this day by those who claim that Morant was innocent; however no evidence has been produced to substantiate them.

Regardless of the question of the existence of such orders, the point of the film is that even if the soldiers' Nuremberg Defence was true, this would not change the nature of their acts, nor of the war. The intended point is not that they happened because the soldiers went out of line, nor because the high command was overzealous, but simply because of the overarching context of the actions: that they were in a war.

[Photo: Breaker Morant (Edward Woodward) and others on trial for war crimes in *Brea*

The film centred around the soldiers' own experiences and put forward their views to the audience, in all the emotional detail that one would expect them to hold. This includes their justifications of their actions that they historically used in court, and their disillusionment with Empire. A most pointed example of this is the depiction of Morant and Handcock in the final scenes of the film after they are sentenced to death, in which their Australian nationalism, and feelings of betrayal

# t propaganda as “anti-war”

*ker Morant* (1980)]

and mourning for their own death was the focus. By centring Morant and Handcock’s personal views on the verdict, it should come as no surprise that many viewers see Morant as a victim of injustice.

Despite this, the depiction of both the accused as guilty, and the military brass as scheming and brutal, even within their own rules of engagement, clearly shows that viewers are not meant to side with one or the other. Pacifistic and reductionist to the point of simply expressing the idea that “all wars are bad”, it is completely detached from a materialist analysis of war. Confused as to why viewers continue to walk away from viewing the film sympathising with Morant, Beresford himself stated in a 1999 interview that its intended message was pacifistic: “But what was interesting about it was that it analysed why men in this situation would behave as they had never behaved before in their lives. It's the pressures that are put to bear on people in war time. Look at the atrocities in Yugoslavia. Look at all the things that happen in these countries committed by people who appear to be quite normal. That was what I was interested in examining. I always get amazed when people say to me that this is a film about poor Australians who were framed by the Brits”.

It was once stated by the director François Truffaut that “There is no such thing as an anti-war movie". This is due to the nature of the medium; film can only appeal to audiences through visuals and sound, and therefore cannot ever convey its reality. It inevitably draws attention to what it can convey to its audiences, that being camaraderie, and a sense of adventure. The effect of this is to reduce any on-screen depiction of war into an epic of pro-war propaganda, regardless of its intentions.

I do not know what it would take for a film to be unmistakably interpreted as an anti-war film, if that is even possible. But given the reasoning outlined earlier that visual media will make whatever depictions of combat it portrays appealing to pro-war audiences (though almost all would never use that label), it would be required to show absolutely no depictions of combat, nor of uniformed soldiers. It would also need to forgo the idealistic notion of being anti-war for its own sake and adopt a materialist and Marxist analysis of war. That is, that in the context of the contemporary capitalist era, it is waged as a means of reconstituting trade relations after they expand to a point where doing so otherwise is no longer possible. Perhaps most importantly, is that such a true anti-war film would need to advance an unapologetically internationalist outlook that states that the only way to end war, is to bring the working class to power through international revolution. This would show to audiences the world-historic way that war will end, and that this is something that the working class must strive for.

# Letters

**RCO needs more than just theory**

I'm a proud member of the RCO, I will never pretend to be naught but anything else, so take this critique as one born of love first and foremost.

I will be blunt: the RCO is far too verbose. Nearly every statement or article put out is dressed in the most theoretical possible language, and the syntax and phrasing that sounds like it crawled out of the volumes of the Collected Works of Lenin. This is not to say that there aren't times when we need to be precise with our words and writings. Yet the majority of the time we fail to be accessible with our statements. The vast majority of the working class are not schooled in Marxist theory. Most unionists don't care to read pages upon pages of theory to say that they should fight for democratic control of their union.

The weakness of the RCO is fundamentally that we are a young organisation. Both in the most literal term, and in the average age of our members, in Melbourne in particular. This fundamentally weakens our ability to go beyond the student and academic bases. We seem to have forgotten the importance of the merger formula, we need both unionists and the socialist movement to truly become the nucleus of the Communist movement in Australia. A Marxist group without trade union militants is nothing more than a discussion circle. We need to struggle to go beyond our image of student academics. This will require an organisation wide discussion, and a discussion that must be held out in the open. If we wish to walk the walk, we claim to talk we need to live up to that.

Our intervention into Unionists for Palestine was a failed mess, not because of the failures of Unionists for Palestine, but because we fundamentally failed to engage with unionists on their basis as unionists, and we failed to break the image we have of students listening to random obscure theory. Every Communist must be more than just a well-read theoretician, they must be a unionist, they must be a worker, they must be leading the charge in their very workplaces to truly be the vanguard we claim to be.

***Brunhilda Olding, Melbourne***

**CFMEU Solidarity & Workers Safety**

As all comrades reading this are aware, recently on the 27th of August, simultaneous solidarity protests were held in solidarity with the CFMEU in seven cities across Australia. The CFMEU had officially played a role in organising the protests, but withdrew its participation the day before, telling workers that the industrial action was not authorised and therefore illegal according to the current labour relations regime. Despite this, tens of thousands of construction workers downed tools to protest the ALP government's takeover of the construction arm of the CFMEU.

I briefly attended the Brisbane rally, though had to leave before the march began. However, I did gain an impression from my brief time there. There was a palpable disgust with the ALP. Obviously, this was the reason the rally was even called, but whatever speeches I caught snippets of, or signage I saw, made completely clear that Labor and Albanese are rightfully seen as traitors to the working class. It does not seem likely that trust will be rebuilt with the ALP anytime soon. This doesn't mean that the workers movement, or even its most militant elements in the CFMEU, are ready, or even aware conscious of the need to break from the ALP-ACTU bureaucracy. It is nowhere near this point, nor will it be until a re-founded communist party guides it there through years of struggle within the labour movement.

The struggle today is a defensive one to protect the autonomy of the CFMEU from capitalist government control. The Labor Right-affiliated Australian Workers Union (AWU) have long been competing with the CFMEU for official representation of construction workers at Cross River Rail (CRR) sites, a project that is centred around a new six-kilometre commuter rail tunnel under the Brisbane River. The AWU are the imposed representatives by the bosses in CPB Contractors, the firm organising CRR construction.

The AWU are appallingly moderate; they are opposed to workers' militancy, and their entrenchment at the expense of the CFMEU would represent a massive setback for the ability of construction workers to represent and advocate for themselves. Negligence has resulted in multiple deaths and injuries of workers at CRR sites over the past two years. A worker died after falling through scaffolding at a CRR site with known and unresolved safety

issues in July last year. Another had died of heat stroke in his car after working through extreme heat and humidity. Multiple other injuries, and near misses have occurred. The CFMEU has taken a leading role in militating against the corporate corner-cutting responsible for deaths on CRR despite its lack of official status; the AWU however is nowhere to be found. Were the CFMEU's construction division to be permanently and decisively captured by Labor, workers will in the immediate future would be left without a large union, or a workers' party, that actively struggles for their safety. CFMEU autonomy, is quite literally a matter of life or death.

***Michael Ruhl, Brisbane***

**What there is to learn from right-wing ideology in post-soviet immigrant households.**

1992 is the year that my family immigrated from Moscow to Melbourne, driven to the South-Eastern suburbs by the call of spotty groups of friends who had made the earlier journey.

Growing up, 'easy' was never the term I heard to describe what those first 10 to 15 years were like. In Moscow, my grandfather was a civil engineer, top of his class in university, and even now he still proudly shows me the medals he was awarded for his work on the stadiums in the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Yet, he seems to despise the Soviet Union. As a child, this was a fact I simply accepted and moved on with, Communism was bad. Yet fairly recently, I brought myself to read a little bit of political theory and it shook me to my core. From the ashes of my previous assumptions grew an intensely uncomfortable and confusing relationship with the Soviet Union.

This has led me to an examination of why post-soviet (In my case, Russian) households have such a strong hatred of the Soviet Union. I should start by acknowledging the first bias, immigrant households clearly left for a reason, so of course my experiences would be tainted by more individuals that disliked the soviet union than not. Although the part that confused me was that this dislike was never all-consuming, I spent a lot of time when I was younger sitting and eating with my grandmother, and through the broken Russian-English, I uncovered her admiration for key figures such as Alexadra Kollontai, and the equal opportunity that was so prevalent in the Soviet Union. I was even shocked to hear harsh criticisms of the west's 'self-centred' culture. Yet, underpinning it all would be discussions of standard of living. My mother would always discuss the multiple families living in one room in their khrushchevka-style apartment building, the queues for food that stretched around block after block, and the poverty that was experienced by everyone around her before perestroika. My grandfather would often chime in, arguing how wonderful it was that the west provided such opportunity to advance your place in society, a capability to go beyond the 'same-wage for everyone' system.

So, it seems, Russia was culturally rich and literally poor, and the west seems to be culturally poor and literally rich. It is my belief that from this exploration of the past's influence on post-soviet immigrant household ideals, that we can understand how to properly import communism ideas into the broader population. It seems from my observations, the west lacks an appreciation for the people, and thus our agit-prop would be most effective in targeting living-standards. It is more effective to argue that a commitment to Communism would bring about greater access to goods and services, because that is what the west has been hard-wired to want. It is only after that point, that we can start pulling upon traditional ideas of improving the living standard of the soul.

***Olga Konstantinova, Melbourne***

# Let's take student politics seriously

Max J

Student politics is a total mess. To many, it is a circus where wannabe bureaucrats cut their teeth in petty campus fights. If communists want to organise students and other young people in serious mobilisations, we need to have a real strategy for engaging politically on campuses. We need to take student politics as seriously as we take all other political engagements.

Students and other young people historically have been and remain a deeply politicised, politically engaged demographic. However, this engagement has not always translated into advances in the class struggle or positive developments for the communist movement. I myself pointed this out when commenting on the relative decline of the Palestine solidarity student occupation wave (Direct Action #14: "Is there a future for the Student movement?"), a wave which has since died out. In that article, I state that communists should engage with students as workers and not just as students.

[Photo: Stall by the former UoN Socialists]

We should view campuses as just another avenue of struggle, no different to one's workplace. The issue with the dominant 'strategy' of the organised Left, it seems, is that there is no strategy at all. Groups such as Socialist Alternative (SAlt), Solidarity, and others appear to orbit campuses for the sake of orbiting campuses, soaking up student members that they tend to lose fairly quickly. If not these groups, they are absorbed by Labor or the Greens. These are student activist groups that, like activist groups in general, exist just to exist.

In engaging on campus, what should communists aim to do? We should aim to supplant the NGO-ified 'student associations' (many of which were built out of the husks of the old student unions) with genuine, democratic bodies of representation: real student unions. On campuses where student unions still exist, and haven't been completely turned into NGOs, we should intervene in them and aim to have communists within them, same as any other union.

Many groups fail in their campus strategy as they aim only to mobilise students to do repetitive, tunnel-visioned activist campaigns, as opposed to building long-lasting and strong alternative institutions. We shouldn't reject these groups entirely, but we should be clear in our critique and be clear in what we want. Their 'strategy' of permanent activism has failed, it has not produced a viable alternative to the NGO-ified student association or the deeply bureaucratic student union.

At the University of Newcastle (UoN), there is an attempt by certain students of a vaguely left-wing political persuasion to 'fix' the Student Representative Council (SRC). I will use this as an example of what we should be going against and avoiding. Running under the name 'Students for Palestine' (unrelated to the SAlt-run Students 4 Palestine groups), they previously held a protest encampment at the Callaghan campus for under three months, before they were defeated by the administration.

[Photo: UoN Students for Palestine]

After their camp was defeated, only then did they decide to call for a Student General Meeting (SGM). Was this SGM called, like at other universities, to get the student association to support the demands of the encampment? No, it was called to pick sides in an internecine fight between sections of the SRC and the UoN Student Association (UNSA). Their call for an SGM, made in early August, carries with it four demands:

**1. That UNSA remunerates SRC members as casual employees**

**2. That UNSA ensures that no member of the SRC can be removed, suspended, replaced, etc by UNSA**

**3. That international students have no barrier to sitting on the SRC**

**4. That UNSA adopts the previous student association's funding model and provides clubs with $2000 up front for the year and that club funding increases with inflation**

**5. That UNSA supports BDS**

Of the 5 demands, only 3 and 5 have any merit. Demands 1, 2 and 4 are not only petty demands made for self-benefit, but are either undemocratic (Demand 2) or financially nonviable (Demands 1 and 4). This is an example of what we as student communists should be against: the co-option of our movement by petty bureaucrats who use the motivation of well-meaning people to fight out their corporate battles. Since there has been very little talk of an SGM from the UoN Students for Palestine crowd since their announcement in early August, it is safe to assume that they did not have the clout they thought they did and were unable to scrounge enough people to force UNSA to call one.

Such battles are dime a dozen in the student politics realm. However, as communists, we should endeavour to intervene in all areas of struggle, including the campus. There are many areas in which students are suffering: in the classroom, on the job, at home, the list goes on. By stepping away from the campuses and not taking student politics seriously, we leave students at the mercy of regressive activists who are effective at wasting people's time, burning them out, demoralising them, and leaving them unwilling to continue any kind of political engagement. They are an industrial acid on radical politics.

For this reason, I make the argument that the Revolutionary Communist Organisation (RCO), and the communist movement in general needs an on-campus strategy. If it is true that communists need a strategy in the broad sense (it is, they do), then it is also true that they need a strategy for engaging with campuses and students. It seems that for the most part, none with any seriousness exist today. With much of the RCO being comprised of young people (most of whom are students), it is vital that it develops a strategy for engaging with the campuses.

# What way forward in Bangladesh?

Anthony Furia

The situation in Bangladesh is horrendous. A government of bourgeois autocrats has been toppled, only for a militarised interim government to take its place. How did this occur? It has happened similarly to every other time political discontent has reached breaking point without a valve to release the pressure, nor a mass party to channel it. In what began as student protests over public service job quotas reserved for independence war veterans and their families, an overcorrective retaliation by a repressive state apparatus swiftly spun things into greater and more ambitious political demands. One of these demands emerged front and centre; the replacement of the entire government, of the Sheikh Hasina regime.

The bourgeois press would have you believe this was achieved in its entirety - the repressive state is gone! All that now exists is a free democratic state, unencumbered by those singularly responsible corrupt individuals who so poisoned the apparatus itself. Hasina is certainly gone - likely never to return to Bangladeshi politics again - but the apparatus remains. The interim government, headed by Muhammad Yunus - an 84 year old economist whose greatest societal 'contribution' was the use of microcredit to help impoverished women - is a laughable farce of a governing body, and one that seems to have unfortunately satiated a bloody, beaten political movement.

The direction for this government? Unclear. Perhaps in fact even to those within it. The direction for the movement? Total dissolution. Indeed, students involved have already expressed support for the idea of a new political party, founded upon the politically vague principles of secularism and freedom. A wonderful end to a social movement; co-optation into the very state which sought your eradication, given the first change of face or false flag of peace.

The simple truth of the matter, and what the political movement of Bangladesh cannot accept without radically altering itself, is that this state in of itself cannot represent them. It does not desire to represent them - indeed, it looks upon those who disturb the sacred social harmony with utter contempt, and wishes for nothing but their utter destruction, their utter pacification, the clipping of their political wings. No matter how many nobel-peace prize winners are placed in control of a bourgeois state, it remains a bourgeois state all the same. It remains a state whose goal, first and foremost, is the self-preservation and management of capital. In killing 300+ protestors in a dispute on quotas, this state panicked. It adjusted itself not through concessions, nor through attempts at ideological appeasement, but an immediate and violent crackdown - what should be a method of final resort for state power became the only method. The success of this political movement was based not on its organisation, nor the clarity of principles, nor even the passion and commitment of its members (which was, make no mistake, certainly high). Its success was based, primarily, on the failure of its opponent - the state itself.

What does this tell us, communists across the world (and particularly in Bangladesh!) about strategy and tactics? The very same thing that has been hammered into the minds of all those with the brains to understand it; we need a mass party. Communists need a mass party. The proletariat needs a mass party, and students, as a proletarianised layer, need this party also. Without revolutionary discipline, without militant opposition to the state, a defined road to power, and mass-organisation, the result is a million more Bangladeshes. A million more BLMs. A million more Occupy protests. Only through the organisation of the class for itself - through the sincere battle for a communist party - can the struggle be won.

What to do in the meantime then - for those of us trapped here in 2024, without a mass party? Well, aside from consciously struggling for one, communists should participate in these movements when and where they can - in an organised and effective fashion. Not for the widening of the struggle into revolution (that won't happen, and without a party we would be utterly unprepared), but for the demonstration of disciplined action. For the demonstration of communist politics in all spheres of life. For the

very political experiences that will be crucial in the active, concerted effort to build the party. Only then, through class struggle, through political organisation, through the unity of the socialist movement, will we reach the first step on the road to power - the party.

[Photo: Mass demonstration of Bangladeshi workers and students against the central government, 2024]

# Write us a letter!

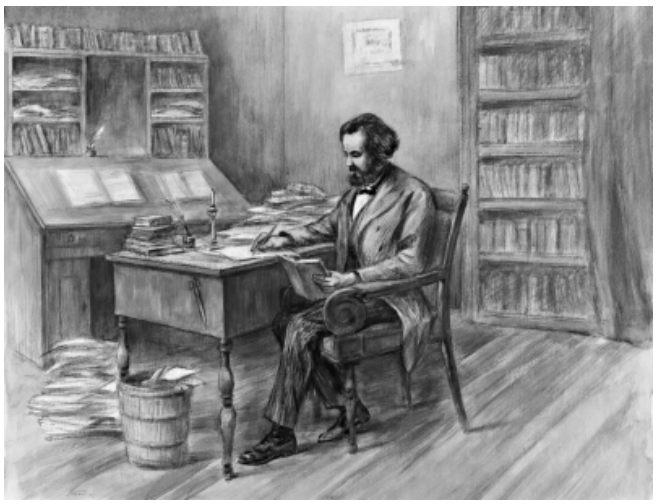
Writing us a letter is easy, and is a good alternative to writing a full article or essay. Letters are submitted like normal articles are, through our email, but aren't held to the same strict standards.

A letter could be any kind of statement or observation, in around 500 words or less. The shorter the better. In a letter, you should give your opinion or statement on something, then finish off with your name and city (any name works - many of our writers use pseudonyms).

In particular, we encourage letters written as a reply to other articles. Of course, you are also free to write a full article in reply to another article, but sometimes it may be better to simply write a letter in. Letters may also be replies to other letters, and of course, an article can also be a reply to a letter.

We aim to build a lively letters section as part of our overall goal to establish Partisan as a platform of open debate and polemic between and amongst the organised Left.

Letters should be sent to **partisanmagazine@proton.me** and contain the subject "Letter: [heading]". The content of your letter can be sent within the body of the email as opposed to a document attached to the email.



[Photo: "Jews in Solidarity" sign at Melbourne Palestine rally (Free Palestine Melbourne Facebook)]

# A protest or a prayer?

## Anthony Furia

In attending the weekly rallies here in Melbourne for Palestine, involving oneself in aspects of organising for Palestine on campus and in activist spaces, one may have an increasing sense of despair surrounding the movement itself. In the face of undeniable, abject political failure, the movement itself has floundered.

It has maintained its broad appeal, marshalled constant rallies, and coordinated dozens of protests in a variety of workplaces and places of education. It has done all of this, and has come to nought. There are a myriad of reasons for this continued failure, yet one that both perpetuates this failure and grows in response to it, like a cancerous tumour benefits from the decline of the body until its collapse, is the shedding of political character.

In other words, the  movement unbecomes itself as a movement. Instead, the mainstream of the Palestinian Liberation struggle careens ever forward towards a totalising pit of self-pity and social grief. The struggle ceases to struggle, and becomes instead an observation. In practice, this is demonstrated most clearly in the Sunday rallies of fame in Melbourne. Here, thousands gather weekly to hear the latest death tolls. The weekly batch of civilians massacred, the most recent war crimes committed by a bloodthirsty IDF, the current total of Palestinians dead to an endless onslaught with no end in sight.

Intermingled with this are the affirmations of solidarity from various speakers - unions, activists, Indigenous peoples from across the globe. We gather there, in the centre of Melbourne, to remind ourselves of an ongoing attempt at genocide. We gather there to affirm our own support to resistance, to observe the unending horror ignored by bourgeois politics, media, and society.

In place of the shared grief and shock that would typically be the product of wider society in general, the Palestinian movement - the politically mobilised - take it upon themselves to observe. To grieve and mourn, publicly, routinely, and without fail, the deaths of Palestinians and the atrocities committed by Israel. Mixed with this grief is a constant performance of anger and outrage - a shock, a fury and rage, at what is occurring. This too is a product of observance, of that very process of public grief, and indeed public guilt.

Let it not be said that this observance is entirely unimportant, or, more accurately, that its components are politically unnecessary. Reminding oneself of the very reason for why we fight is just as important as the fight itself - keeping in mind the current situation is crucial, and affirming solidarity is an affirmation of commitment to struggle.

Yet here we encounter the growing problem of the movement - there appears, less and less, to be the fight itself. An act such as the weekly protests is not a battle - it is a ritual. A symbolic

routine of observation, a public demonstration of one's grief and often guilt in the failure of the struggle thus far. When comrades gather to hear the death tolls, to hear the speeches describing killed children and maimed civilians, they are gathering not to battle, but to mourn.

To mourn both what has been lost, Palestinian lives, and in this instance to mourn a struggle that has not yet failed - the movement not yet entirely lost. This is the case not merely for these rallies, but for protests and events across the nation. Even the Student General Meetings (SGMs) are an expression of observance over protest. These are events designed not to achieve political goals or aims, nor define these goals or aims, but to gesture at the very symbolic act being performed (the meeting, the protest, the discussion group) as political enough,  and gather in observance.

The truth is, any political movement needs political direction. Currently, there is none for the Palestinian struggle. It is a self-perpetuating cycle of pity. There are pickets, such as those in Melbourne over electromold, and those previously at the docks (my thoughts on which were made clear in an earlier article for Direct Action), but these lack a unified vision, goal, or anything resembling a mass base.

Rather, the pure numerical majority of the struggle is losing itself as a struggle at all. It is becoming a despairing acceptance of reality, a ritualised display of outrage. To speak in a political direction - to address the thousands who attend these rallies and protests, and present them with an actual political vision, an actual approach, would be a monumental step forward.

Rather than the cry "come back next week and every week", the call should be towards sustained organisation, towards the building of centres of power in unions, campuses, and society, towards genuine ultimatums and escalating action as the struggle itself escalates.

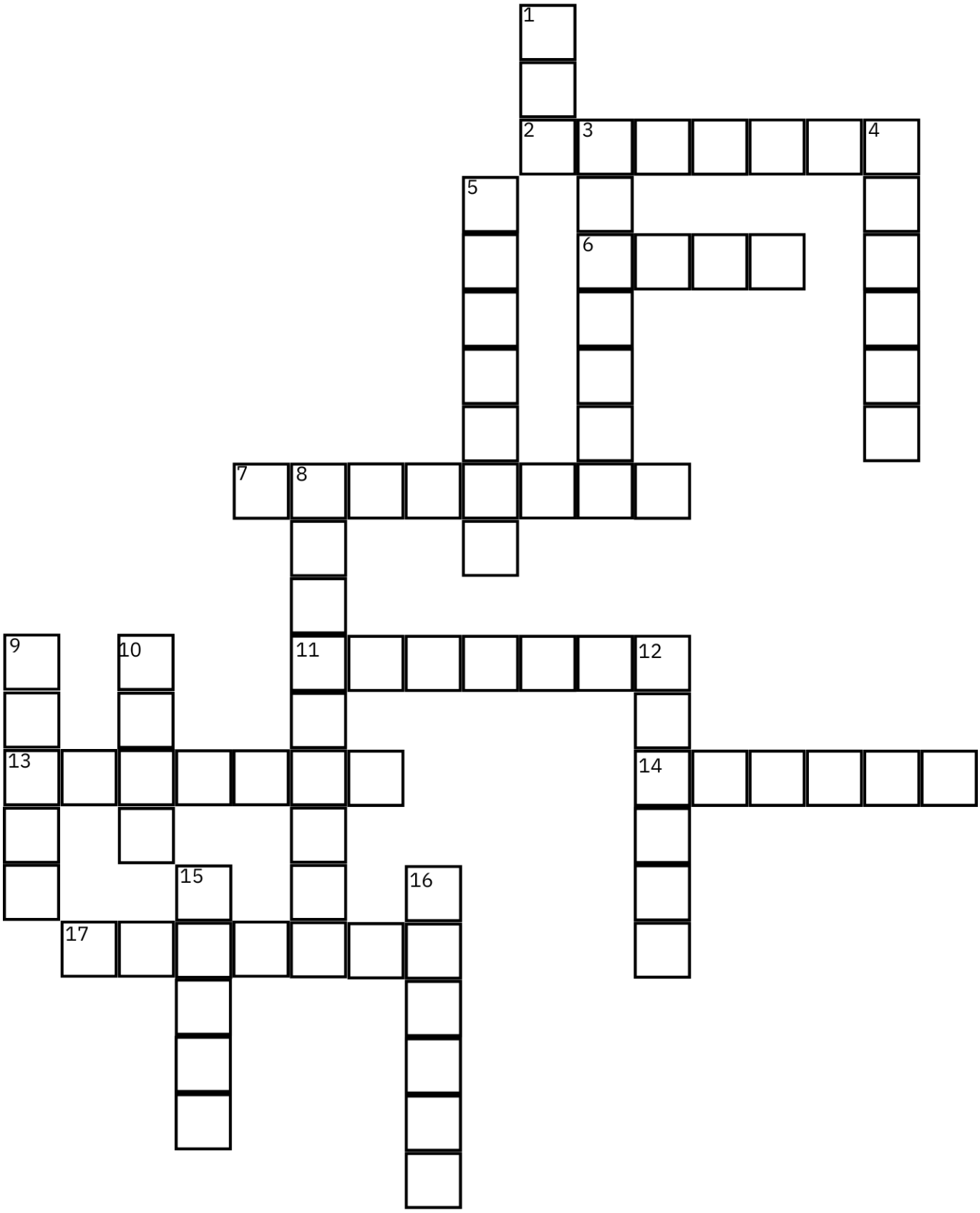
To truly win - to have even the remotest hope of victory in any sense of the word, we must break from a deadlock of grief and despair. We must move forward, with our outrage, with our fury and anger, yet clear-eyed and politically minded. What must be done is the extension of resistance to every facet - the organisation of struggle through sustained mass-organisations, able to cohere forces for consistent struggle.

Communists, of course, argue for this through the argument for a mass party - the communist party. We strive to organise the struggle for Palestinian liberation upon its class lines and character - to maintain independence from, yet organise with, those forces who support the struggle for national liberation along differing lines. To do this the movement must have political character. We must push for this character in the same breath as we push for the mass party itself; unrelentingly, confidently, and with passion.

To liberate ourselves is to struggle - patiently, passionately, and sincerely. We cannot do this through ritual and observation, through a pacified demonstration of resistance. Why struggle at all if we do not struggle to win?

[Photo: "Stop the genocide in Gaza" banner at Melbourne Palestine rally (Free Palestine Melbourne Facebook)]

# Australian Left-History crossword



[Photo: Unemployed communist workers taking part in a 'work for the dole' program in the 1930s]

## Across

2 Australian Prime Minister who met Mao Zedong in the 1970s.

6 Utopian socialist who led the 'New Australia' movement in the 1880s.

7 Australian Trotskyist who was briefly Mayor of Leichhardt.

11 Whitlam called a woman from this country a 'Nazi B*tch' in the 1970s.

13 This Italian-American musician was stuck in Australia in 1973 after refusing to apologise for calling journalists 'bums' and 'f*gs'.

14 Left-wing folk rock band formed in 1973.

17 Site of the first major industrial action taken by Indigenous Australians in 1946.

## Down

1 One Big Union

3 NZ-born Australia ophthalmologist who was briefly a member of the Communist Party of New Zealand.

4 Australian trade union leader in the NSW BLF and Green Bans activist.

5 Labor lawyer turned Maoist who split from the CPA in the 1960s to support Mao.

8 A pro-Gang of Four group that split from the CPA-ML in the 1970s.

9 This late Filipino Maoist leader once gave a lecture at the University of Sydney in the 1970s.

10 Controversial NSW premier in the 1920s who had conflicts with both fascists and communists.

12 National secretary of the CPA in the mid 60s to mid 70s.

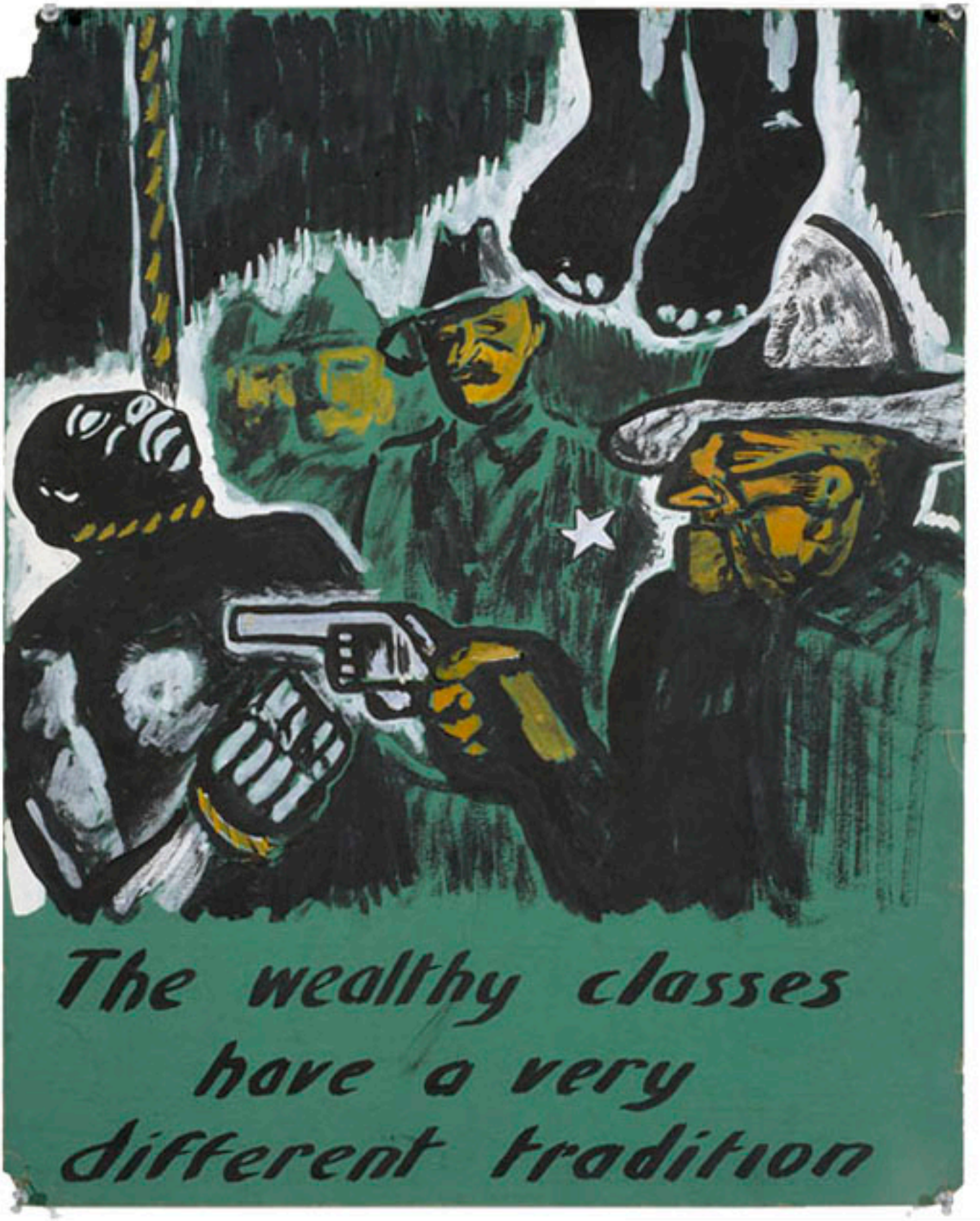
15 UK punk rock band that met Gary Foley during their 1970s Australia tour.

16 Australian councilist and Pannekoek correspondent.

## Key

1 IWW
2 Whitlam
3 Hollows
4 Mundey
5 Ted Hill
6 Lane
7 Origlass
8 Red Eureka
9 Sison
10 Lang
11 Estonia
12 Aarons
13 Sinatra
14 Redgum
15 Clash
16 Dawson
17 Pilbara

HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT!
CANCEL the RENTS
STRIKE
NO EVICTIONS
POWER TO THE PEOPLE
TENANTS UNITE
SAFE HOUSING 4 ALL!!


The wealthy classes
have a very
different tradition

WHO WOULD TRUST A UNION

LED BY THIS MAN?